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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [AG](#) [MO](#) [WI](#)
SUBJECT: USUN/NEA MEETING WITH SYG'S PERSONAL ENVOY FOR
WESTERN SAHARA PETER VAN WALSUM

Classified By: Amb. John Bolton. E.O. 12958. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

11. (C) Summary: In a July 26 meeting at USUN with Personal Envoy for Western Sahara Peter van Walsum, NEA/DAS Gordon Gray explained current U.S. thinking on Western Sahara: encouragement of the submission of a robust Moroccan autonomy plan before the October expiration of the MINURSO mandate and progress toward a Moroccan-Polisario dialogue. Consistent with views expressed in our April MINURSO mandate renewal Explanation of Vote, the U.S. will evaluate progress achieved by parties by October before committing to another MINURSO rollover. Van Walsum said that he plans to visit the region in early September and said he believed that the idea of an "end point" approach would be unacceptable to the Polisario if the word "autonomy" were anywhere in a text. He reiterated his view that the parties had to accept the reality that the Security Council will not allow the Western Sahara to become a Chapter 7 issue and that once that is understood, only two options remain for the parties: direct negotiation or impasse. The former he thought was preferable but the latter more likely. Continuing, he said the prevailing view by those beyond the immediate parties is that the status quo is the less painful of these two options even though negotiation would be preferable. Van Walsum said he is leaning toward advocating a Moroccan-Polisario dialogue, partly to call Algeria's bluff that it is not a party to the dispute. Gray said that the Polisario leadership's response to such a call would be a test of its claim of Sahwari leadership. End Summary.

12. (C) The Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara Peter van Walsum met July 26 at USUN with Ambassador Sanders, NEA/DAS Gordon Gray and NEA/MAG Office Director William Jordan. Van Walsum was in New York for four days to renew his contract with the UN and to consult with interested missions on the progress of his work. The joint USUN/NEA meeting with van Walsum was arranged both to accommodate travel schedules and to ensure the delivery of a strong message to van Walsum who will be visiting the region and Friends' capitals (Madrid, London and Paris) in the coming months.

U.S. Seeks Agreement on End Point;
Addressing the Principle of Self-Determination

13. (C) Gray told van Walsum that, following up on its Explanation of Vote delivered at the adoption of the April MINURSO rollover, the U.S. is working to seek "agreement on an end point" in the Western Sahara issue that is acceptable to all parties and addresses the principle of self-determination. In pursuit of that goal, the U.S. is

encouraging Morocco to develop a credible autonomy proposal and is considering how to facilitate the start of a diplomatic process to achieve a resolution, including how to get Morocco and the Polisario to engage in dialogue as soon as possible. That said, the U.S. recognizes that there is a fair amount of skepticism as to whether Morocco will actually produce a credible plan.

14. (C) Gray said that the message to be sent to Morocco is that it must move forward on a robust autonomy plan before the expiration of the current MINURSO mandate on October 31. Gray said that the U.S. has informed Morocco that such a plan must have significant Polisario input to be both robust and credible. The Moroccans, Gray stated, have said they are receptive to Polisario input. The question is whether they will produce a credible plan in a timely fashion. As for the Polisario, how the Polisario senior leadership responds to such a plan will be a test of its credibility and will indicate whether it will stay with the old think or opt to negotiate a new life for the people it represents. And working with the Algerians will be difficult, Gray said. Algerian officials, if pushed, concede that an independent Sahrawi state is not likely, yet they remain fixated on process and principle without being creative, though in the end Algeria might be willing to encourage the Polisario to engage in a dialogue. Summarizing the U.S. efforts, Gray said that U.S. believes a solution will be difficult to achieve but worth the effort. We all know what the solution is going to look like. The challenge will be to create the appropriate face-saving process to reach that solution. Gray encouraged van Walsum in his travels to urge the parties to action: Morocco on the importance of tabling a robust plan soon and Polisario (and Algeria) on Polisario engaging in dialogue with Morocco.

Van Walsum's Travel Plans, Strategy

15. (C) Discussing his work and travel plans, van Walsum said that not only had he received no replies to a June 19 letter (not made public) to the four parties (Algeria, Morocco, Polisario, and Mauritania). In his meetings with both the Algerian and Moroccan ambassadors in New York in the last few days, however, the letter had not been mentioned at all. Van Walsum said he plans to visit Morocco and Algeria in early September and then consult in Friends' capitals, beginning with Madrid, thereafter. Morocco has already greenlighted his visit, and he is hopeful that Algiers will approve as well. He said that Algiers, piqued by the April MINURSO report that repeated van Walsum's unwelcome ideas, had refused to receive him in June. He said that he will meet Polisario Presidential Adviser Mohamed Khaddad in the Hague on August 2.

16. (C) Van Walsum asked what U.S. intentions were vis-a-vis a renewal of the MINURSO mandate in October. Gray replied that it has been difficult to explain to Congressional critics that MINURSO is fulfilling its mandate and that the U.S. senior leadership has not yet made a decision. But it should not be assumed that the U.S. will agree to a rollover in October. Ambassador Sanders agreed, adding that the view that MINURSO may be more of a hindrance than a help in reaching a solution to the Western Sahara issue is not limited to Capitol Hill. Van Walsum asked whether a U.S. decision to terminate MINURSO would occur in any case or only were it determined that no progress was being made. Gray said that the hope is that Morocco will have a plan, adding that a "chess master once said that the threat is stronger than the execution." NEA/MAG Office Director Jordan confirmed that we are looking for some sign of progress. It is not that anything specific must occur, but something that will lead to forward movement must occur.

17. (C) Van Walsum said he believed the Polisario would not be able to accept an "end point" approach, that whenever the word "autonomy" appears, the Polisario refuses to discuss it.

He said it will be difficult to get to an end point if you are not allowed to discuss the word "autonomy." Van Walsum said that he believes he can succeed in convincing the parties -- arguing step by step -- of only one thing: first the reality that the Western Sahara issue will remain a Chapter 6 issue -- that the Security Council will not allow to drift into a Chapter 7 situation; and secondly, that being the case, that only two options remain for the parties -- a continuation of the impasse or direct negotiations. Van Walsum said Morocco is already convinced of this view and that the Polisario and Algeria may eventually be convinced, despite their current adherence to the view that the Security Council is bound by international law to implement UNGA Resolution 1514(XV) -- on the granting of independence of colonial countries and peoples -- as it applies to Western Sahara through Chapter 7 measures.

18. (C) Van Walsum said that once the parties agree on his conclusions then the challenge will be to get them to agree that dialogue is better than impasse (which van Walsum contends is the preference of most of the Friends). Then the Security Council may say that there will be no preconditions but to sit down and that a political solution must provide for self-determination. Van Walsum said that he is thinking now of accepting the Algerian position that Algeria is not a party to the issue, as they have been insisting despite their obvious interests and actions. He said he may not mention them at all when he makes his pitch for dialogue. Jordan noted that the Polisario has never demonstrated its ability to act as a party independent of Algeria and that acceptance of a Moroccan-Polisario dialogue will be a test of its claim to act as a valid interlocutor on behalf of the Sahrawi. Van Walsum said that he envisaged that once a Moroccan-Polisario dialogue began, we could say that it would be left to them to negotiate a role for the Mauritaniens and Algerians. In the meantime, van Walsum said, he preferred the shock treatment of ignoring Algeria and calling their bluff.

BOLTON